

Orthodoxy 101

An Introduction to Orthodox Christianity

Purpose of the Course

- To reacquaint an Orthodox Christian with his or her Faith years after he or she “graduated” from Sunday School.
- To help the non-Orthodox spouses of Orthodox Christians understand their mate’s religion.
- To familiarize participants with the history, teachings and doctrines of the Orthodox Christian Church.
- To enhance the student’s understanding of the Orthodox Christian faith and lifestyle.
- To begin to prepare an individual who has an interest in becoming an Orthodox Christian communicant.

Method

- Lecture and Discussion
- Question and Answer

How to Get the Most Out of the Course

- Attend all the classes and ask questions
- Read one or all of the recommended books
- Study the notes that will be given to you
- Attend Church Services regularly

Course Day and Time - Saturday Evenings - 6:00 - 8:00pm

Weekly Schedule and Topics of Discussion

Session 1 - Introduction to the Orthodox Church

An introductory discussion on the history, doctrines, and teachings of the Church will be made. A cursory discussion on the importance of the Sacraments to Orthodox spirituality will also take place.

Session 2, - The Church Building

This session will be conducted in the Church. An explanation of the appointments, icons and symbols in the narthex, nave and sanctuary will be given.

Session 3, - The Church Year

The season from Pre-Lent to Pentecost in the Orthodox Church is rich in liturgical celebration and festal commemoration. Observances such as the Feast days of St. Gregory Palamas, St. Mary of Egypt, Pascha, and Pentecost take place during this time of year. The liturgical significance of all this time of year and meaning of all festal observances will be made.

Session 4, - The Major Feast Days of Our Lord and The Theotokos (Mother of God)

There are twelve such Feast Days: Christmas, Pascha, Ascension, the Transfiguration and the

Annunciation are but a few. The significance of all Twelve Feast Days is both historical commemorations and events that have meaning for our lives today.

Session 5, - The Bible, Prayer and Fasting

Orthodox Christianity teaches that there are three pathways that lead to God and a personal relationship with Him: The Bible, Prayer and Fasting.

Session 6, - The Divine Liturgy and How to Live It

The Divine Liturgy is the central act of worship in the Orthodox Church. Though regarded by many as a ritualistic gem, the reality is that many contemporary Christians neither understand liturgy, nor do they know how to meaningfully participate in the Divine Liturgy. How to come to better know the Divine Liturgy and worship will be the thrust of the discussion for **Session 6 and 7**.

Session 7, - The Divine Liturgy cont.

Session 8, - The Sacraments and What They Do for Us

The Orthodox Church is a Sacramental Church. The so-called "Seven" Sacraments (Baptism, Chrismation, Eucharist, Confession, Unction, Marriage, and Ordination) will be discussed. The relationship of Sacraments to Grace and Spirituality will be discussed.

Session 9, - Just What Does the Orthodox Church Teach About the Virgin Mary and the Saints?

Most Protestant Christians have difficulty in accepting the teaching of the Orthodox Church on the Virgin Mary and the saints, and the veneration accorded by Orthodox Christians to them. What is the basis of the Orthodox Christian teaching of the Ever-Virgin Mary? Who are the saints? Why do Orthodox Christians pray at times to the Saints and Mary? Answers to these and other questions will be given.

Session 10, - Our Journeys to Orthodoxy

Testimonies of 2 or 3 converts to the Orthodox Church.